

Stretching Tips to Prevent Injuries

Stretching improves posture, flexibility, balance, coordination, and sports performance, while decreasing risk of injury, shortening recovery time, and reducing muscle tension. Utilize the following tips:

- Before stretching, always do a 5-minute warm up. Warm muscles, ligaments, and tendons are more flexible. Stretching cold muscles can cause injuries.
- Never bounce. Gradually stretch the muscle until you feel mild tension, but not until it feels uncomfortable.
- Hold each stretch for 10-20 seconds, allowing the muscle time to lengthen slowly.
- Stretch muscles on both sides of your body. For example, stretch both the front and back of your thighs (quadriceps and hamstrings) so they become equally flexible.
- Take your time when stretching. Use this time to clear your head of all the clutter so you can concentrate on your workout.

If you have any neck, back, skeletal, or joint pain, consult with your physician or physical therapist before stretching.

About the Author

Laurie Bell, BS is a two-time bodybuilding champion, health club owner, 42 year old mother, fitness lifestyle expert, and the author of *Lose the Lies, Lose the Weight*, a comprehensive resource covering weight loss motivation, fitness, nutrition, and body shaping workouts. For everything you need to lose weight, tone, firm, and sculpt your body, read *Lose the Lies Lose the Weight* by Laurie Bell. No hype. No fad diets. No excuses.

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